The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorials interpretations of matters affecting labor concerning in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
1 MILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1703 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1943 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 33, NO. 48

FACING *the* FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

There has been a lot of loose talk to the effect that Army publications distributed among troops serving overseas carry a considerable amount of anti-labor material calculated to inflame the minds of the men in the armed services against organized labor.

We decided that these complaints were worth looking into. Instead of accepting hearsay evidence, we thought it would be wise to go to the direct sources in other words, to read and study the items involved.

On making inquiries, we learned that the Army keeps a complete file of the "Stars and Stripes" at the Pentagon Building, the vast War Department headquarters on the Virginia side of the Potomac. We were informed by Major A. H. Raskin that we would be permitted to examine these files. Major Raskin, who used to be a labor news reporter for the New York Times, is assigned to the task of promoting better relations between the Army and labor and we found his assistance exceedingly helpful.

First of all, we learned that "Stars and Stripes," the soldiers' newspaper, is published in various editions, including one in London, another in Algiers, one in East Africa and a new one in Sicily. There may be others we don't know of. The only ones we saw were the London and the Algiers editions.

How Labor News Is Handled

Most of the news published in these papers is about military matters and War Department policies directly affecting the troops. News from home, except when it is of outstanding importance, is confined to small items of two or three paragraphs. It consists chiefly of Associated Press dispatches, written concisely and objectively.

In looking over the October issues of the Algiers and London editions of "Stars and Stripes" we found daily accounts of the proceedings of the AFL convention in Boston, emphasizing the constructive policies voiced there and convention action relating to furthering of the war effort by American workers. These stories, although brief, were certainly not of the kind to enrage soldiers against labor. On the contrary, the only possible conclusion a reader could get was that labor is doing a good job on the home front and is anxious to do a better job.

The Algiers edition was free from items on picayune, inconsequential strikes. It handled news of important strikes, such as the coal mine shutdown, objectively and impersonally. In fact, we found these stories much preferable in their approach and content than those to be found in the daily press here at home.

However, the London edition of "Stars and Stripes" does apparently make a practice of publishing every other day or so brief stories on unimportant strikes—such as a walkout of 200 milk wagon drivers in Brooklyn.

We couldn't understand why the armed forces overseas should be interested in reading of such petty affairs which have no real effect on the war effort and the representatives of the Army to whom we talked couldn't understand it either.

The Good With The Bad

They pointed out to us that the editors of these Army publications are supposed to be guided by a code prepared by the War Department which contains the following paragraphs with regard to labor news:

"It is a reasonable presumption that troops are interested in news of labor, including reports of strikes, labor disputes, etc., whenever such events are of a magnitude as to have national interest or of such character as to affect materially the lot of the fighting man. But the good must be reported with the bad. It would be false to presume that the armed forces are interested in favorable information, but derive no benefit from that which is positive and favorable."

Perhaps the editors of the London edition of the "Stars and Stripes" interpret this to mean that they should sandwich items on inconsequential strikes between constructive labor news stories. If so, they are not carrying out the intentions and policies of the War Department, we were assured.

To sum up, our study convinced us that the reports regarding anti-labor material in Army publications are unfounded or grossly exaggerated. We believe that these publications, as a whole, are trying to do a good job and a fair job, under trying conditions, of keeping the men overseas fully informed on war news and domestic news. We feel that the Special Service Division of the Army and Lieut. Col. Franklin S. Forsberg, in particular, should be commended for their efforts to transmit straight and unbiased news material to these Army publications.

We do think improvement of this service is possible and necessary. In order to help bring this about, we intend to call to the special attention of those concerned the issues of these publications with which we believe will interest American soldiers. In this effort, every AFL union can help. The soldiers are concerned especially about the prospects for post-war jobs. We call upon unions which are making plans to facilitate the employment of ex-soldiers when they are demobilized to let us know about such activities so we can pass on the word to the boys who are fighting for us across the seas.

WPB Consults Unions On Production Of Articles Workers Need Chiefly

Washington, D. C.—President William Green called on all AFL Central Labor Unions to supply information on what types of civilian goods are most urgently needed by workers in each locality.

His letter revealed that the government is now able for the first time since the war started to increase production of household articles because America is producing more of certain types of materials than war needs require.

"This is the first official request for labor's participation in reconversion planning," Mr. Green emphasized. "Your prompt and effective cooperation will give weight to over 200 documents for sustained opportunities for labor cooperation."

Following the most new developments, Mr. Green said:

"As war production accumulates reserves, civilian production will inch back. The War Production Board announces that these items will be produced in the first three quarters of 1944:—2,000,000 electric irons, 900,000 electric refrigerators, and 900,000 sewing machines. Most needed articles will be added as materials permit.

"The Office of Civilian Requirements of WPB, which is responsible for planning these increases in civilian production, asks the cooperation of organized labor in helping them to know what items are most urgently needed by workers in their respective localities. The War Production Board will, of course, reserve the right at any time to reduce materials for this program if unexpected war needs develop. We are in no means at the end of the war, but we are at a place where we are producing more of some materials than war needs require and where more items can be included in the expanding plans for civilian production for 1944.

"I am enclosing a list of products the need for which may be very urgent among workers in your locality. Will you please immediately undertake to indicate the order of priority and how widely we stand in each item in the program of expanding commercial production.

"The Office of Civilian Requirements advises me that they would welcome comments on urgent articles, for such comments will strengthen their arguments for inclusion of a particular item in the production program."

The list of articles which the Government wants checked according to the urgency of the need for them follows:

Work gloves, shoes, blankets, bedding, washing machines, refrigerators, sewing machines, vacuum cleaners, ironers, electric irons, electric bulbs, kitchen utensils, furniture, ovens, stoves, automobiles, bicycles, hair pins, bobby pins, safety pins, netting (for babies), thermos bottles, animal traps, insecticides and canning equipment.

Manpower "Shortages" Being Licked By Increased Efficiency of Workers

Washington, D. C.—Efficiency of workers is rising at so rapid a rate that the much ballyhooed "manpower shortage" is being licked—and, as organized labor has contended, without the need of compulsory legislation to require workers to go where ordered.

That was made clear both in official statements and in action by the army closing down or curtailing operations of a half dozen big factories making shells and other ammunition.

One of the big factories for the huge cancellations, army chieftains said, is that "production records have been far in excess of expectations." General L. H. Campbell, Jr., chief of ordnance, said the War Department now has enough ammunition "for any probable operation."

Meanwhile, Donald M. Nelson, head of the War Production Board, credited mounting labor productivity in part for substantial increases during October in practically all war production categories.

His lieutenant, Vice Chairman Charles E. Wilson, added that "the utilization of manpower in the aircraft industry is becoming very much better."

Paul V. McNutt, chief of the War Manpower Commission, admitted that the same is true in other industries.

Now that the commission has finally gone after "labor hoarding," inefficient supervision, bad scheduling of production, and other evils attributable to management, "we have been able to scale down tremendously—or even cancel outright—the demand for new workers in many instances," McNutt let it be known.

"If we can make maximum use of our available supply of workers—eliminate waste—we could release a margin of additional productive effort that would carry us over the top," he said.

"There are enough men and women at work today in our plants and factories—if properly utilized—to take up the load on all of our current production schedules."

Congress Starts Work On Four Bills To Aid Demobilized Service Men

Washington, D. C.—Congress is beginning to get busy on providing aid for demobilized service men and women, after repeated demands for such action from President Roosevelt and the American Federation of Labor.

Bills just introduced in both houses call for:

Up to $300 mustering-out pay on leaving the service.

$15 to $25 a week unemployment compensation, depending on number of dependents, if without a civilian job at any time during the first 18 months after leaving the service.

Social security credits, based on pay of $160 a month, for time spent in the service.

The program was introduced in four separate bills. Identical bills covering unemployment compensation and social security credits were introduced in the Senate by Senator Wagner of New York, George of Georgia and Chavez of Missouri, acting jointly, and in the House by Chairman Doughton of North Carolina of the Ways and Means Committee.

Senate Majority Leader Barkley and Chairman May of the House Military Committee introduced bills providing for mustering-out pay. May said the plan had the backing of the White House.

President Roosevelt urged in a message that Congress provide now for service men and women in the armed services. He said such action would give a big boost to morale of fighting men.

Under the May-Barkley plan, mustering-out pay would go to all persons held below the grade of major in the Army and lieutenant commander in the Navy. It would be $100 for less than 12 months' service, $200 for 12 to 24 months' service, and $300 for 6 months or more service.

The program of unemployment compensation calls for $15 a week for single persons with an additional $5 a week for's dependents, and $22.50 for each child up to a total of $25 a week. It would be handled through the Social Security Board, cooperating with State unemployment agencies. It would be limited to those refusing "suitable employment."

The social security provisions would have the effect of bringing older old age and survivors' insurance groups, of servicemen and women who were not covered in civilian life. For those who were covered while civilians, the effect would be to increase the prospective amount of the coverage.

Engineers Build Air Field In 24 Hours

Washington, D. C.—Aviation engineers of the Northwest African Air Service command did one of the outstanding jobs of the war in constructing air fields under fire on the Sidarno beach-head, the War Department disclosed.

The engineers, many of whom worked in construction trades in civilian life, landed just behind the infantry and artillery of the Fifth Army, and within 24 hours had laid out and constructed an air field in a cultivated field of wheat and cotton.

By the end of a week, the engineers had completed three air fields, with runways for fighter aircraft, taxi strips around them, and parking stands on each field.

Practically all their work was accomplished under fire. Enemy artillery harried the men as they built air fields on the beaches, while German fighter planes made sneak raids.

NEW OFFICERS ELECTED BY AFL AUTO WORKERS

Chicago, Ill. — The 1943 biennial convention of the AFL Automobile Workers of America elected three new officers to top positions. The new roster is: International president, Lester Washburn, Lansing, Mich., succeeding Irvan Carey; international secretary-treasurer, Anthony Doria, Chicago, Ill., succeeding Jerry Aldred; international vice president, George Gribbon, Evansville, Ind.

Legion Appoints Two AFL Members To Serve On Its Labor Committee

Indianapolis, Ind.—Acting on a resolution adopted by the 25th national convention at Omaha, National Commander Edward N. Scheiberling announced the appointment of a national labor relations committee of the American Legion.

Six legionnaires were named on this new committee, three representing labor and three representing employers. The chairman of this committee, who according to the Omaha convention resolution must be a veteran member, is to be selected by the committee.

Representatives of labor on the new committee are:

James B. Burns of Washington, D. C., past department vice commander of California, who is national president of the Railway Mail Association.

Past National Vice Commander John Franklin Sullivan of St. Albans, Vt., for more than 30 years an active member of Order of Railway Conductors, and for nine years general chairman of the union's general committee of adjustment.

Past Department Commander Edward J. Kelly of Taftville, Conn., member of the Railway Mail Association affiliated with the AFL.

Representing industry on the committee are:

Lawrence Francis Quigley of Chelsea, Mass., past member of the national rehabilitation committee of the American Legion, and commandant of the Soldiers' Home at Chelsea. He served as mayor of Chelsea from 1922 to 1935.

Past Department Commander Rufus Bethea of Birmingham, Ala., real estate broker and insurance agent, and active in civic affairs.

Past National Executive Committeeman Isadore E. Levine of Laporte, Ind., an attorney active in civic affairs.

The new labor relations committee of the American Legion shall be charged with the following duties, according to the provisions of the Omaha resolution:

"The responsibility of ascertaining facts and furnishing well-considered advice and assistance on all matters relating to the legion's policy on all questions pertaining to industrial relations and on which the American Legion may wish to state its position.

"Rendering every possible aid, when requested by the national commander, to any other national committee of the American Legion acting on post-war problems that affect labor."

UNION LEADER HEADS BRITISH SUPPLY MISSION

Washington, D. C. — Britain is sending a new kind of diplomat to Washington. Ben Smith, who, as a labor member of Parliament represents one of the poorest districts in London, has been given a $20,000-a-year job as chief of the British Supply Mission in this country. He also gets the rank of minister.

Smith started as a cab driver, developed some ability as a boxer, went to sea as a merchant seaman, came home to help organize the Transport and General Workers' Union.

In 1935, he was elected to Parliament and has been there most of the time since. When the war brought about a coalition government, Churchill made Smith a member of his cabinet. His job as cabinet minister assigned among American labor leaders, having recently toured this country and Canada.

N. Y. SCHOOL CUSTODIAL WORKERS WIN PAY BOOST

New York City — An agreement with Mayor LaGuardia and the board of education on a new wage scale for custodial workers in the city's elementary and high schools has been reached, it was announced by the International Union of Operating Engineers and David Sullivan of the Building Service Employees International Union, Local 891, of the Custodians Union is affiliated with the Brotherhood, and Local 74, composed of custodial workers, is an affiliate of the Building Service Unions.

News Briefs

SEABEES MARCH IN ON HEELS OF JAPS

Washington, D. C.—Dispatches from the Pacific war front illustrate how quickly the Seabees, made up chiefly of AFL construction workers, are being moved up right into the thick of the fighting.

These Navy construction battalions were reported to have landed on the Gilbert Islands, while the marines and infantry were still mopping up the defeated Japs, to rush installation of airfields and defenses. When those airfields are completed by the Seabees, it is expected they will be used as the base for intensified bombing of the Japanese Marshall Islands, 350 miles to the north.

WAR FUND AIDS ITALIAN ANTI-FASCISTS REFUGEES

New York City—Because of the staggering influx of refugees into Switzerland since the overthrow of Mussolini, the National War Fund has approved a special appropriation of $75,000 for refugee relief work, the Unitarian Service Committee in Geneva was informed this week, according to Abraham Bluestein, executive director of the AFL Labor League for Human Rights and member of the budget committee of the National War Fund.

THOUSANDS OF WORKERS CHEATED OUT OF WAGES

Washington, D. C. — Few persons realize how many thousands of workers still toil for wages they cannot collect when due, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins told Congress on the basis of an analysis of State wage laws made by the Department of Labor.

"Even today, when jobs are plentiful, workers are swindled by flybynight employers who are financially irresponsible and cannot or do not pay wages," Miss Perkins similarity; Miss Perkins said. "Forty-five States have wage laws protecting a worker's right to the wages he has earned, but workers often are not familiar with those laws."

WLB APPROVES PAY BOOST FOR STREET RAILWAY MEN

Washington, D. C. — To restore equality of pay for operative employes of the two major transportation systems in the Los Angeles, Calif., area, the WLB approved an agreement between the Los Angeles Railway Corp. and Los Angeles Motor Coach Lines and the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employes of America, AFL, which provides for a change in overtime provisions and for a 5 cent an hour increase in starting rates for operating employes.

The agreement will receive time and a half pay after 8 hours instead of after 9 hours. The board also approved a 5-cent an hour increase to the approximately 1,900 non-operating employes of the two companies which the parties had negotiated to bring the rate for this group more in line with rates paid for comparable occupations in the area.

P. M. DRAPER IS DEAD; CANADIAN LABOR LEADER

Ottawa, Can. — P. M. ("Paddy") Draper is dead. He was 70 when he died here after a heart attack in his home in this city.

"Paddy" was born near Ottawa. He became a printer's devil at 19 and eventually gained the highest post in the government's printing office. But it was as champion of the workers that he attained international fame.

From 1906 to 1920 he was secretary-treasurer of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada. In 1921 he was president. "Tom" Moore, retired temporarily, "Paddy" succeeded him and served as president from 1922 to 1929. Ill health compelled him to retire, but in recognition of his services, the congress made him honorary president for life.

POLICE CHIEF SENTENCED FOR ATTACKING UNION MAN

Washington, D. C.—Attorney General Francis Biddle announced that William Buchanan, city marshal of Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, was sentenced to serve in prison by Federal Judge Thomas C. Trimble at Jonesboro, Arkansas, when he pleaded guilty to charges of violating the Federal Civil Rights Statute. The sentence was suspended and the defendant placed on probation for one year.

The information charged Buchanan entered the Walnut Ridge office of the Rod Carriers, Building and Construction Union, "wrongfully and without justification or excuse" assaulted Robson Abernathy, union business representative, "dragged him (Abernathy) from said premises into the street . . . and, using abusive and threatening language, ordered him to leave the city forthwith."

The prosecution was the first application of this statute to assault on a labor union representative by local police authorities.

AFL Opens New Drive For Subsidies As Green Urges The Senate To Act

Warns Inflation Is Bound To Come Unless Prices Are Supported

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green demanded immediate restoration by means of food subsidies to prevent an inflationary spiral which would be disastrous to the whole program.

Appearing before the Senate Banking and Currency Committee, Mr. Green made it clear that if Congress persists in killing the Government's subsidy plan it will destroy all the effectiveness of price control and force labor to seek general wage increases to make up for higher living costs.

The Senate Committee is now considering the Commodity Credit Corporation Bill which was adopted by the House of Representatives after it had debated authorization of price subsidies.

Mr. Green challenged the committee to suggest a more effective or economical method of controlling prices than through direct subsidies to producers and distributors.

He insisted that expenditure of even a billion dollars for such subsidies would save the Government many more billions in the purchase of food and war materials, besides considerable savings to the consuming public.

At the same time, he warned that the opponents of subsidies are injuring the best interests of the nation's economy when the prices of agricultural products are permitted to go sky-high, they are bound to drop to ruinous levels after the war emergency ends.

Stabilization of prices and the cost of living is not the only objective of the price subsidy program, Mr. Green pointed out. He emphasized that this program also seeks to stimulate and increase farm production to the maximum point. Existing food shortages will be aggravated in the post-war period, Mr. Green said, because our country will be called upon to send tremendous quantities of foodstuffs to the liberated peoples of devastated Europe and Asia to keep them going until they can once more raise their own food.

The AFL President reminded Congress that more than a year ago it made a solemn promise to the American people by the passage of the Economic Stabilization Act that prices and wages would be stabilized at the levels prevailing on Sept. 15, 1942.

Wages have been stabilized, Mr. Green declared, but price control has been ineffective and, as a result, the cost of living has continued to mount. It should be the desire and duty of Congress, he said, to hold and strengthen the line against inflation, not to weaken and destroy it by abolishing subsidies.

All available evidence points to the fact that if subsidies are disapproved there will be a sharp rise in bread, milk, eggs and meat—along with many other important food items—by next year and it will make it impossible for workers to buy what they need to sustain their strength.

Therefore, it is up to Congress to protect the American people from the selfish greed of special interests or to invite the wrath and retaliation of the voters, Mr. Green concluded.

Federal Judges Promise to Put Black Markets Out of Business

Philadelphia.—Federal judges in the Philadelphia area met recently and decided to "fine the black marketeers out of business."

Sitting en banc to the word, Judge Harry M. Kalodner sent four price-control violators to jail for 45 days and fined them $1,000.

"If there's any profit in black market operations," Kalodner said, "Uncle Sam is going to take it all back in fines. Apparently some people, and we don't mean business, are going to be a losing game for black marketeers. Fines and penalties are going to be higher, and I will not reconsider any sentence I impose."

No Wage Restrictions In Post-War Agreed To In "Big Four" Program

Washington, D. C.—Basic agreement that Government war controls may have to be continued temporarily in the post-war period but should be eliminated promptly thereafter, was reached in a radio discussion by which industry, labor, farmer and Government representatives participated. But restrictions on wages should not only be lifted as soon as the war ends, they agreed.

The forum was the first of a series called "America Tomorrow," to be broadcast each Tuesday evening over the Blue Network with "Big Four" participation. The programs are sponsored by the United States Chamber of Commerce, but the AFL has been invited to represent labor on each show and spokesmen for agriculture, Congress and the Executive branch of the Government will also take part.

"What great job in America today," said Eric Johnston, head of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, "is to bring about increased productivity and unity among the Big Four on the domestic front — management, labor, agriculture and Government."

Such a surprising degree of unity was achieved when the opening discussion that Senator Truman, representing Congress, declared:

"I believe that labor and agriculture can reach such agreements, will certainly be a pleasure to serve in the Senate of the United States in any kind of capacity."

Albert Goss, master of the National Grange, said:

"I sincerely feels just like Mr. Green has said. When there are lots of folks looking for jobs there isn't any need of any ceiling on wages."

OWI Explores Causes of Turnover

Washington, D. C.—Approximately twenty-six definite causes, singly or in combination, underlie the heavy labor turnover in American war plants, the Office of War Information reports.

The OWI survey showed that many of the causes are familiar ones in industry, while others are new and often can be prevented.

Desire to secure a job at better wages appeared to be a major motivating factor in workers quitting. Another reason is a feeling of the worker that he is not doing enough for the war effort, even though he may be working in a war plant. A worker may quit a job because he seems to be no chance for advancement, or he may feel that the job gives him no chance to express his ideas and that, therefore, his ability is going unrecognized. Poor health causes some quits. A worker often quits because he cannot find adequate housing or because he gets tired of battling his way long distances on crowded street cars and buses. He may not like his hours, his working conditions or his foreman. He may consider his work too hazardous.

These are the long-familiar reasons for workers quitting.

Then there are newer, lesser-known, but just as potent reasons. If a worker is a stranger in town, he may become restless and unhappy because of a lack of social contacts or recreation after work. He often becomes discouraged because of enforced delays, layoffs or work interruptions which he does not understand even though they may be justified. There may not be proper facilities for preparing meals near the plant. The worker may think the war is nearly over and wants to find a more permanent peacetime job. And then some men are naturally restless and periodically get the urge to look elsewhere for a job.

Women have a whole set of reasons of their own for leaving, such as the desire to join a husband who is in service or inability to cope with the double job of housekeeping and working. Women often take jobs to get money for a specific purpose and quit when they have earned enough. Women quit to get married or to give birth to a baby. Some decide their children need more than part-time care.